



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Region 3 Citizens' Advisory Committee Holiday Inn Bozeman December 16, 2010

CAC Attendees: LeRoy Mehring, Rick Grady, David Gibson, Sam Samson, Tom Henderson, Robin Cunningham, Cyndy Andrus, Barb Cestero, Rick Arnold, Bill Mealer, Ken Sinay, Joe Cohenour.

CAC Members Absent: Gene Budeski, Mike Myer, Tom Milesnick, Ross Lingle.

FWP Staff Present: Pat Flowers, Mel Frost, Jerry Walker, Scott Optiz, Cheryl Morris, Kurt Alt, Joan Buhl, Kari Shinn, Mike Vaughn, Sam Sheppard.

Guests: Tom Michalek, Flo Butera, Michael Nicklin, April Buonaimici, David Russell, Debra Foul, Sunni Heikes-Knapton, Joe Gutkoski, David Graham, Scott Davis, Betty Stroock, Richard Lessner, Kara Stermiz, Vito Quatraro, Glenn Hockett.

Legislators: Ted Washburn, Dan Skattum, Joe Balyeat, Art Wittich, Tom Burnett, Kathleen Williams.

Greetings, introductions, roundtable, public comment

Pat Flowers: - Pat reviewed the history and scope of the Citizens' Advisory Committee. Legislators were introduced.

Roundtable:

Joe Cohenour – recently attended PLPW meeting in Lewistown. Discussion continues with problematic wildlife on private land and issues associated with landowners. Committee discussed I-161 and what it will do.

Would like more information on elk study in southwestern Montana (Kurt will discuss later in meeting).

Rick Grady – good job by wardens this past hunting season.

Tom Henderson – restoration funding of Butte Silver Bow and Clark Fork - \$100,000,000. Should CAC comment (heavy metals, fishery, tailings issue)?

MSU upset with FWP – confusion on what's going on. Dispute?

Wolverine protection – why are wolves protected and not wolverines?

Public Comments:

April Buonaimici – contaminated wells in Gateway area and sewer system?

Pat Flowers:

Wolf Management in Montana (update) – very close to interim agreement last week when Idaho opted out. Conversation ended immediately, including hunting as part of the temporary solution. No immediate solution at this time. State will continue to respond to livestock depredation. FWP would like to manage numbers of wolves like other species.

Numbers of wolves have increased in Gardiner area and the Gallatin.

MSU & FWP Dispute – professional difference of opinion prompted by analysis of FWP data by Scott Creel and the impacts it would have on wolf populations. FWP has great relationship with MSU on fish and wildlife research projects and hopes that continues to be productive for all of us.

Water Panel – individual v. community wells, individual septic v. community sewer systems, impact on ground and surface water

Moderator, Kathleen Williams

Panel Members:

Mark Schaffer, Bureau of Mines and Hydrology

Alan English, Gallatin Local Water Quality District

Debbie Earl, Montana Watercourse, MSU

Michael Nicklin, Nicklin Earth and Water, Inc.

Alan English: Ground water/surface water interaction to preserve and protect water quality because of the variety of public and private septic and well systems.

Working on three projects concerning waste water (individual and public well and septic) - 1) River Rock area water quality, 2) pharmaceutical study, and 3) current waste water practices of Gallatin County disposal practices

Conclusion: location of wells seems to be biggest influence on compounds in wells.

Mark Schaffer: Ground water investigation in relation to development. Studied the Four Corners project along the West Gallatin River. Ground water linked to surface water (changes in Valley, incidental recharge – development removes the sources of recharge).

Irrigated land has decreased 20% from 2002-2007. Groundwater development increased by 23% from 2002-2007. Changing landscapes. More development, less surface water.

Michael Nicklin: Study in Missoula Valley

Looked at change in water use as Montana has shifted from agriculture to developed lands. Over the last 20 years, there has been no discernable change in water levels.

Land use transitions are important. DNRC beneficial use permit almost impossible to get for a well.

Kathleen Williams: Upper Missouri River closed to new water projects/permits. People have claimed all rights and use—water is spoken for.

Debbie Earl – Teaches course on watershed science and issues of local water resources for real estate education. Exempt wells must be preserved for individual real estate. Emphasize building away from rivers.

Education is the key to change stewardship of water resources for the better.

Kathleen Williams:

-State owns water and is permitted to private landowners.

-Timing, location and use affect watershed.

-One community well is easier to manage and regulate than many individual wells.

Pat Flowers: FWP is working with landowners in the Big Hole on improving headgates, etc. to put more water in the Big Hole River – conservation agreement. Strides are being made in the Jefferson Valley as well.

2011 Montana Legislative Session

Pat Flowers - 132 bills proposed relating to fish, wildlife and parks. Lots of people interested in fish and wildlife issues. Legislators shared their ideas and proposals for 2011 session.

Joe Balyeat - SD 34 – Vice-chairman of Senate Fish and Game Committee. There are a number of generic bills or placeholders at this time.

LC1005 – clarify use of dogs to track wounded game animals. Data shows we are wasting game that has been wounded. Needs to be clarified in the law. This bill was previously killed in the 2009 session.

LC0062 – residency. Anyone that was born in Montana can come back and hunt in Montana and purchase resident licenses. Would be good for Montana families.

LC0458 – monitoring and tracking program for wolf diseases.

LC0459 – control of wolves. Elk calf ratio dropping because of wolf depredation. Currently control is being decided by a judge and people who believe they love animals. Our best chance to win in court is to give Montana the authority/right to manage wolves – not the federal government.

Questions/Comments:

Residency – will people have to live here any certain length of time? *Have to have a Montana birth certificate – open to suggestions at this time.*

What percentage of folks fit into this category?

Fiscal impact?

Children of illegals – will they be allowed to come back here and hunt?

Does this suggest fishing? *It does not include fishing at this time.*

Is the number of resident licenses going down? *Pat – numbers are relatively stable in Montana. Do have concern about recruitment to compensate for number of aging hunters. Percentage of adults hunting is dropping.*

Would these licenses be counted against the 17,500 nonresident licenses? *Would be able to buy over-the-counter licenses at resident rates, but not special permits.*

Kathleen Williams - HD 65 – Goal is to contribute to constructive dialogue. Will be working on tax, natural resources and ag issues. Let me know if I can help.

Dan Skattum - HD 62

Ted Washburn - HD 69 – Concerned about I-161. Prices are too high and license sales will drastically drop. Will negatively impact block management.

LC0916 – sell mountain lion and wolf licenses entirely over-the-counter. Will bring in more revenue.

Federal delisting of grizzly bear – be ready to have grizzly bear hunting season (framework set up by Balyeat's bill)

LC1060 – artificial light (luminok) – legalize to locate wounded animals or location of arrow after miss. Will decrease waste of game.

Habitat Montana dollars – currently 80% used for buying land and 20% for maintenance – actually only using 2% for maintenance. Want more funds used toward stewardship/maintenance of land.

LC1030 - Elkhorn's (HD 380). Make it a trophy area with a minimum waiting period of seven years. No landowner preference.

Comments:

Pat Flowers: Habitat Montana dollars do not fund fishing access sites.

I-161 was developed by private citizens. FWP did not direct or take position on initiative.

PLPW – block management pot of money could get smaller, limiting number of cooperators in state.

Kurt Alt: There is currently a proposal to change deadline to apply for bull elk and buck deer permits to March 15. Comment period until February 2011. Would go into effect in 2012.

Art Wittich – SD 35 – serves on Senate Fish and Game Committee. Will be working on Medicaid revision and property tax reform.

LC615 – require wardens to get permission to access private land (Pat – wardens are already required to do this with the exception of public health risk). Same requirements to be proposed for DOL.

Vito Quatraro – Montana only state that sells combination license. Recommend separating out elk and deer licenses—individualize. Montana fees are lower than any other states.

Residency bill – firm believer in come back to Montana to hunt. Worry about number of hunters and crowding on public lands.

Glenn Hockett – oppose changing allocation of funds from Habitat Montana. Want to maintain 80% for land acquisition.

Likes bill to require DOL to have permission to come on private land.

LC0198 – impact to WMAs. Transferring WMAs to DNRC is of great concern.

Joe Gutkoski – bison bill – transfers management of bison from DOL to FWP and manage as wildlife, game animal and reintroduce on public lands. How would legislators vote on this bill? Legislators – need to read and see the final product; hear the pros and cons. Subject to review.

Art Wittich – the state isn't ready to transfer to FWP. The premise of giving it to DOL was based on disease expertise. Have to work through the issue and see who the experts are on disease – don't see shift.

Pat Flowers: Proposal by Senator John Brenden (LC0175) provides for reversion of FWP funds to general state funds.

LeRoy Mehring: What's the motivation? All state school land trust money does not go to education nor does lottery money. Legislators decide on where the money goes.

Pat Flowers: Kurt Alt will retire on December 31, 2010. Thank you, Kurt, for your many years of dedication and contributions to the resource.

CAC Caucus:

Respect Your Rivers –Cyndy Andrus

- Media spots have been show cased over the last six months.
- There's about \$900 in funds remaining – need to figure out how to raise money.
- Need other folks to step up to the plate and help.

Pat Flowers: Would another organization to take this on— perhaps TU?

-Would like to keep with CAC. Rick Arnold and Bill Mealer will assist to keep program in CAC.

Rick Arnold: We need to refresh partnerships and then set a course of action. We need to look at reestablishing goals and objectives, what our plan is and where we are taking it, other things we want to address and then look at fundraising. A committee of Rick Arnold (Chair), Bill Mealer, David Gibson, and Barb Cestero will work on these goals and issues. Richard Lessner will also help. Partner with others and invite them to be on the committee.

-Mel will prepare a spreadsheet on what and where we've spent money

-Mel will set up a meeting with David (Brickhouse), Cyndy, and Rick.

- Committee will report back next meeting.

Elk Study – Pat Flowers: Study proposed by FWP and DOL to look at brucellosis infection rates in elk. Focus will be on perimeter of current known area – first year in Blacktail area south of Alder, Montana. Why are we doing this? We know generally where there are higher brucellosis rates and the risk of transmission to livestock. Plan is to capture and collar 100 elk and track

them over a period of five years and determine how many are seropositive (exposed, but not necessarily infected with the disease). At the end of five years, we'll go back and remove elk that are seropositive and conduct further testing to determine actual infection rates. APHIS is funding study. Study will help guide managing elk numbers and brucellosis. Pat can invite Neil Anderson to talk about this study. We will forward any written material to CAC members on this subject. Will talk more about this study at next CAC meeting.

Tailings Issue in Butte – Funds are managed out of Helena (DEQ, FWP & Governor's Office). Tom Henderson: Cesspool under Civic Center that could breach into Silver Bow Creek. Concerned about the fishery.

Rick Arnold: Need more background information and awareness level.

How are we making decisions to purchase these properties? Should remediation money be used for this?

Pat Flowers: Invite NRDP (Natural Resource Damage Program) to next meeting to give us background and outline how they make decisions? Possibly invite R2 CAC and meet in Butte or Anaconda.

Meeting dates for 2011

March 31

June 15

October 5

December 7

Parks – Jerry Walker: Moving ahead with reservation system at state park campgrounds—implementation date March 2011. Point of Rocks project on Yellowstone is done.

Pat Flowers – Lobbying. Collectively as a group, you cannot lobby. We will alert you on legislative bills of particular concern and you can follow-up as you choose.

Rick Arnold will share TU updates out on legislative session.

Jeff Hagener is the new development director of the Montana Wildlife Federation.

Meeting adjourned.